

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1646

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

USUN NEW YORK 564

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN, PFOR, UN, AR

SUBJECT: PANAMA'S BID FOR UN SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT

REF: A. PANAMA 3552 AND B. BA 3109

1. WE DISAGREE WITH INTERPRETATION IN PARAGRAPH 4 REF A. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE LITTLE DOUBT OF WILLINGNESS OF LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT PANAMA'S ASPIRATIONS CONCERNING THE CANAL, BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE ARGENTINA'S GESTURE IS EVIDENCE OF THAT. ON CONTRARY, AS SEEN FROM HERE, ARGENTINE DECISION TO WITHDRAW SECURITY COUNCIL CANDIDACY TOTALLY UNRELATED TO PANAMANIAN ASPIRATIONS TO USE SC SEAT AS FORM FOR LEVERING US INTO NEW TREATY. FROM ARGENTINA'S POINT OF VIEW, DECISION TO WITHDRAW MADE ON CONSIDERATIONS UNRELATED TO PANAMA OR CANAL ISSUE.

2. PRIOR TO OAS ELECTION, PANAMANIAN FORMIN TACK DID INDEED TRY TO BARGAIN PANAMANIAN SUPPORT FOR ORFILA IN EXCHANGE FOR ARGENTINE SUPPORT FOR PANAMANIAN SEAT ON SECURITY COUNCIL. A PARTICIPANT AT THIS MEETING BETWEEN TACK AND ARGENTINE FONMIN VIGNES TOLD EMBOFFS AT THE TIME THAT DESPITE TACK'S ENERGETIC ARGUMENTS, NO SUCH DEAL WAS STRUCK (SEE REF B).

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VIGNES TOLD TACK THAT AFTER OAS ELECTION ARGENTINA WOULD GIVE CONSIDERATION TO PANAMANIAN REQUEST. TO STRIKE DEAL

IN ADVANCE, HE TOLD TACK, RAN RISK OF LOSING BOTH OAS
SECRETARY GENERALSHIP AND SECURITY SEAT.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS SAID BEFORE THE OAS/GA, HOW-
EVER, THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE THE SC SEAT WOULD
BE GREATER IF ORFILA'S CANDIDACY RAN INTO TROUBLE. IT DID
AND IT MAY WELL BE (THOUGH WE CANNOT CONFIRM IT) THAT
ARGENTINES SIGNALLED TO PANAMANIAN DURING OAS/GA THAT THEY
WOULD RECONSIDER GIVING UP SC SEAT IN RETURN FOR PANAMA'S
CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ORFILA'S CANDIDACY--PROVIDED HE WON.
WHETHER OR NOT THIS WAS THE CASE, AFTER ORFILA WON, ARGEN-
TINES RAN INTO STRONG PRESSURES FROM OTHER LA STATES
WHO BELIEVED ARGENTINA SHOULD NOT HAVE OAS SEC GEN AND
SC SEAT AT SAME TIME. ARGENTINA CONCLUDED THAT TO
PURSUE SC SEAT WOULD LOSE IT LA SUPPORT ON OTHER
ISSUES. THUS, IT CEDED SC POST TO PANAMA.

4. COMMENT: IN GENERAL, WHILE ARGENTINA PAYS
APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF LIP SERVICE TO PANAMANIAN CANAL
TREATY, REVISION ASPIRATIONS ISSUE NOT ONE OF GREAT
MOMENT TO GOA. INDEED "CRUDENESS" OF PANAMANIAN
EFFORT TO GET ARGENTINA CONCESSION ON UN MATTER
HAS RAISED MANY HACKLES IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.
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